

Senate Bill 125
3/13/07

Good Morning Madam Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Ginny Hill and I work as a forensic psychiatrist at Montana State Hospital. I am here to support the new, improved Senate Bill 125, which has been amended following input from interested parties contacted by our State's Attorney, Paulette Kohman. Senate Bill 125 has been streamlined and simplified since it was originally submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee. With the currently recommended amendments, we are essentially asking to modify only two areas of the Title 46-14 forensic M.C.A. codes:

- 1) One modification relates to small changes in the criteria for involuntarily medicating a person found unfit to proceed with his/her criminal charges and committed to Montana State Hospital for restoration. These changes reflect the criteria established by the United States Supreme Court in the Sell vs. U.S. case.
- 2) The other change involves creating a process for involuntarily medicating a person committed to Montana State Hospital after a finding of not guilty by reason of mental disease. The process recommended in this bill is very similar to the one used for civilly committed patients, who have also been court committed for dangerousness.

After careful consideration, and discussion with other agencies that would be impacted by the original draft of Senate Bill 125, it was believed prudent to prioritize changes that are most needed at this time. We also began to recognize that with the passage of Senate Bill 149, our other concerns will likely be addressed by STEP.

In conclusion, please support Senate Bill 125 with the currently proposed amendments. These amendments will facilitate treatment for forensic patients at Montana State Hospital by establishing appropriate safeguards for involuntary medication. I welcome any questions you may have.

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